

**In the Specification:**

Page 3, lines 24-26:

A<sup>2</sup> This condition of continuously assigning, deassigning, and reassigning, at a high frequency is known as thrashing. ~~These performances of signal 10b and 106 c will be described in a subsequent flowchart.~~

Page 5, lines 18-21:

A<sup>3</sup> This is because the frequent changes in finger assignment, and its associated latency effects, may cause a[[n]] perceptible degradation in the composite signal provided by the communication device to a user.

Page 7, lines 17-19:

A<sup>4</sup> Then, a time period over which the signal-strength exists is determined. The finger assignment can then be compared by one or more signal-strength thresholds and/or to a time threshold.

Page 7, lines 22-25:

A<sup>5</sup> In particular, the last two steps of comparing and evaluating the finger assignment include several additional steps. The finger assignment is enabled for combining if it is a new[[ly]] finger assignment or it if continues to satiate a "combine" signal-strength threshold.

Page 9, lines 1-6:

A<sup>6</sup> The accompanying drawings, which are incorporated in and form part of this specification, illustrate embodiments of the invention and, together with the description, serve to explain the principles of the invention. [[ ]] The drawings referred to in this description should be understood as not being drawn to scale except as specifically noted.

Page 9, lines 11-12:

A<sup>7</sup> PRIOR ART FIGURE 1B is a graph of the signal strength of two conventional multipath signal-strengths over time.

Page 21, lines 4-8:

A<sup>8</sup> Timespan 10 450 of Figure 4 illustrates this locked state scenario because its timespan is not greater than N\_LOCK 424, by visual observation. The recover[[ ]]y of signal 106b from timespan 10 illustrates a short-fade condition that did not create thrashing in a

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communication system because of the present invention's finger assignment management system.

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Page 28, lines 6-10:

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In step 5012 of the present embodiment, the timer is stepped. This condition accounts for the scenario where the multipath signal has sufficient signal-strength, e.g. above T\_LOCK threshold, such that it has a high probability of quickly returning to an even higher signal-strength, e.g. T\_COMB, suitable for the subsequent combining operation.

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